

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 181400Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5519

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 5907

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SY RO

SUBJECT: SYRIAN PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ROMANIA

REF: BUCHAREST 5594 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. WHILE THE PUBLIC RECORD SPOTLIGHTS ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF SYRIAN PRIME MINISTER AL-AYOUBI'S VISIT TO ROMANIA (NOV 10-14), CURRENT CEAUSESCU EFFORTS AT MIDDLE EAST PEACE-MAKING (REFTEL) PRESUMABLY WERE ALSO ON AGENDA. ONE MFA SOURCE PROFESSED SATISFACTION THAT VISIT HAD GONE "MUCH BETTER THAN EXPECTED", GIVEN GOR'S UN ABSENCE ON ANTI-ZIONISM VOTE, ITS BOYCOTT PROBLEMS WITH ARAB LEAGUE AND FACT THAT ROMANIAN CEMENT WAS ON BOARD FIRST SHIP TO TRANSIT SUEZ CANAL BOUND FOR ISRAEL. HOWEVER, EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR HERE CLAIMS SYRIANS PRESENTED GOR WITH LONG LIST OF ECONOMIC COMPLAINTS. END SUMMARY.

2. VISIT OF SYRIA'S PRIME MINISTER WAS BILLED AS ONE OF SERIES OF PUBLIC WORKING MEETINGS WITH PRIMARY EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING AND EXPANDING GOR-SYRIAN ECONOMIC TIES. TWO ACCORDS
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ON PHOSPHATES WERE SIGNED, AS WELL AS AN AIDE-MEMOIRE ON CREDIT

USAGE AND A COOPERATIVE PLAN IN THE RADIO-TV FIELD. NEGOTIATIONS WILL CONTINUE WITH VIEW TO ADOPTING AGREEMENTS RELATING TO PUBLIC HEALTH, SCIENCE AND CULTURE, INVESTMENT, DOUBLE TAXATION, POST AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS, JURIDICAL ASSISTANCE AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESZRCH. HEAVY ACCENT DURING VISIT ON IMPLEMENTING PAST ECONOMIC ACCORDS IS INDICATOR THAT THERE HAS BEEN SOME PAST TROUBLE IN THIS REGARD, A FACT CONFIRMED BY EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR HERE. SEE PARA 4)

3. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR ALSO SHARES OUR ASSESSMENT THAT EMPHASIS OF VISIT WAS ECONOMIC, NOT POLITICAL. HE TOLD CHARGE THAT CAIRO HAD INFORMATION SADAT SPECIFICALLY INSTRUCTED AL-AYOUBI TO AVOID TO EXTENT POSSIBLE BEING DRAWN INTO POLITICAL DISCUSSION WITH CEAUSESCU. HOW SUCCESSFUL SYRIAN PRIMMIN WAS IN THIS REGARD AMB DAOUD CLAIMED NOT TO KNOW.

4. DAOUD SAID SYRIANS ARRIVED WITH LONG BILL OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST ROMANIANS IN ECONOMIC-COMMERCIAL DOMAIN. ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS DELIVERY BADLY LAGGING ON VARIOUS JOINT PROJECTS INCLUDING REFINERY, SUGAR MILL, FERTILIZER PLANT AND AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO WAS PARTY TO CONVERSATION, SAID THIS REMARKABLY INTERESTING BECAUSE DAY AFTER SYRIA ARRIVED HE WAS SUMMONED TO PATAN'S OFFICE ON SHORT NOTICE. HE WAS HANDED SAME LIST OF PROJECTS DAOUD JUST MENTIONED WITH REQUEST HE IMMEDIATELY QUERY VIENNA TO SEE IF AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN COLLABORATION WITH GOR ON ALL OR ANY OF SUCH PROJECTS IN SYRIA. ANSWER PROMPTLY CAME BACK IN NEGATIVE.

5. AMB DAOUD OBSERVED THIS WAS ADDITIONAL PROOF OF HIS PERSONAL THESIS THAT ROMANIANS ARE VASTLY OVEREXTENDED IN THEIR THIRD WORLD ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES. HE SAID NOT A SINGLE GOR-GOE PROJECT DATING FROM 1962 HAS BEEN COMPLETED. HE NOTED HE WAS PREPARING A RECOMMENDATION TO CAIRO THAT NO FURTHER JOINT PROJECTS BE UNDERTAKEN UNTIL SUCH TIME AS ROMANIANS ARE PREPARED TO MEET IN FULL PAST COMMITMENTS.

6. AS IS USUAL IN MIDDLE EAST PORTION OF COMMUNIQUE SIGNED WITH MORE MILITANT ARABS (SYRIA, IRAQ, LIBYA) ROMANIANS DROP THEIR STANDARD REFERENCE TO "GUARANTEED SECURITY FOR ALL
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STATES IN REGION", I.E. ISRAEL, AND INCLUDE ONLY NEED FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM 1967 OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND NEED TO RECOGNIZE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL RIGHTS. (COMMENT: "SECURITY GUARANTEE" WAS PRESENT IN NIGER COMMUNIQUE SIGNED SAME DAY SYRIAN ONE WAS PUBLISHED.) SOMEWHAT SURPRISING, PARTICULARLY WITH SOVIETS AGAIN PUSHING FOR A GENEVA CONFERENCE WITH PLO PARTICIPATION, IS FAILURE EVEN TO MENTION GENEVA CONFERENCE ALTERNATIVE IN COMMUNIQUE; INSTEAD, ROLE OF UN IS EMPHASIZED. NEW LANGUAGE ON

THE "URGENT NEED TO EXAMINE THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE CONFLICT AND IN THE FIRST PLACE THE JUST CAUSE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" IS ADDED AND MAY REFLECT SUPPORT FOR CEAUSESCU'S LATEST ROUND OF ME ACTIVITY.

7. COMMUNIQUE ALSO MENTIONS GOR'S BID FOR MEMBERSHIP IN NON-ALIGNED INCLUDING SYRIAN PLEDGE TO ASSIST GOR PARTICIPATION IN NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT "IN APPROPRIATE FORMS". SINCE SYRIA WAS RUMORED TO BE OPPOSED TO ROMANIAN PRESENCE AT LIMA, EVEN THIS CAREFULLY HEDGED PLEDGE MIGHT INDICATE ROMANIAN PROGRESS ON THIS FRONT. (COMMENT: ROMANIA DID CLEARLY BETTER IN NIGER FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMUNIQUE PUBLISHED FOLLOWING DAY; NIGER EXPLICITLY SUPPORTED ROMANIA'S BEING GIVEN PERMANENT OBSERVER STATUS AT COLOMBO.

8. COMMENT: WHILE SYRIANS CANNOT BE VERY PLEASED AT SOME OF MORE RECENT ROMANIAN ACTIONS ON MIDDLE EAST FRONT (GOR'S ABSENCE ON UN ANTI-ZIONIST VOTE, FACT THAT FIRST SHIP THROUGH SUEZ CANAL BOUND TO ISRAEL CARRIED ROMANIAN GOODS AND TAROM LINKS WITH ISRAEL THAT RESULTED IN ARAB LEAGUE BOYCOTT) THERE WERE NO PUBLIC INDICATIONS OF THIS DURING AL-AYOUBI'S VISIT HERE, AND GOR APPARENTLY KEPT ITS BALANCE ON ITS MIDDLE EASTERN TIGHTWIRE. WHETHER IT CAN ACTUALLY IMPROVE ITS POSITION WITH BOTH ISRAEL AND THE ARABS AS RESULT OF ITS LATEST ME ACTIVITY IS STILL AN UNANSWERED QUESTION.
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